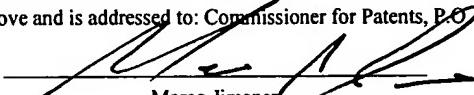


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Marco Jimenez

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In the application of:

Jun OZAWA, et al

Serial No.: Unknown

Filing Date: Concurrently Herewith

For: VACUUM PROCESS SYSTEM

Examiner: Not Assigned

Group Art Unit: Not Assigned

Parent Serial No. 09/856,411

Parent Filing Date: May 17, 2001

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Mail Stop Patent Application
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313

Dear Sir:

The Applicants respectfully request entry and consideration of the following Amendment before fees are calculated for the above-identified continuation patent application and before examination on the merits commences.

The present application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 10-343596 filed on November 17, 1998 and Japanese Patent Application No. 10-369138 filed on December 25, 1998. All papers and documents required to make the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f) were submitted in the international application number PCT/JP99/06408 (International Publication No. WO 00/30156), from which the prior application was a national stage.